



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

DON'T FIGHT IT ALONE

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By the time you finish your shift today, nearly 3,000 women in the United States will have suffered a violent attack by a domestic abuser. By the end of the day, the lives of more than three women nationally will have been taken by an abusive husband or boyfriend.

The U.S. alone loses \$5.8 billion annually because of productivity losses and medical services resulting from domestic violence.

It's a crime that affects a dramatic number of people. One in four women report experiencing domestic violence in her lifetime and a startling 74 percent of Americans said they personally know someone who was or is a victim of the crime.

Statistics like these from the Domestic Violence Resource Center and others are abundant, and notably inaccurate. As dramatic as the numbers may seem, it is well established that many victims never report their abuse, indicating that the statistics are likely much, much higher.

Agencies across Kentucky and the world are asking the same question — how can we keep victims safer and hold more offenders accountable? But, in domestic violence cases, the answer to those questions doesn't require new technology, equipment or — in some cases — even new revenue. According to some experts, the answer is to look at this age-old crime in a new way that requires asking more questions and coming together as a community to deter domestic violence.

"We all have to realize as police officers that we can offer justice — that's easy. But safety and justice together is a little tougher combination," said Mark Wynn, a nationally-recognized expert on domestic violence and 20-year veteran of the Metropolitan Nashville (Tenn.) Police Department. "On the crisis line in Nashville several years ago, a victim of domestic violence would call the first time after the fifth assault. So we have a long history there. Your job is to find that history."

That history may involve more than just prior calls for service or old emergency protective orders, said Richmond Police Chief Larry Brock. With a new domestic violence advocate-officer team in place, the Richmond Police Department has begun taking an investigative look at DV crimes instead of responding to them as singular incidents.

"That's when you get to look at some of those other things that may be involved like terroristic threatening, harassing communications, criminal mischief — all those things that tie into domestic violence that, if an officer is taking a report and just >>